



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Division of Ecological Services

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In Reply Refer To:
FWS/R2/OKES/
ARNS

June 23, 2005

Colonel Wally Walters
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Little Rock District
P. O. Box 867
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203 – 0867

Dear Colonel Walters:

Enclosed is the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) final report on the fish and wildlife resources likely to be impacted by proposed actions related to the Arkansas River Navigation Study, Arkansas and Oklahoma. This report fulfills the reporting requirements set forth in Section 2 (b) of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 *et seq.*) (FWCA) and is intended to accompany the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) feasibility report on this project.

The Corps, Service, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission have been in constant and frequent coordination regarding the assessment of impacts the navigation channel deepening feature would have on fish and wildlife resources. As of the date of this report, a full assessment of adverse impacts and a complete mitigation plan have been developed for impacts due to disposal of dredged material at terrestrial sites within the floodplain of the navigation system in Oklahoma. Unfortunately, due to the extremely expedited schedule for this study, the aquatic impacts analysis has not been completed as of the date of this report. The Service understands that the Corps intends to fully mitigate for aquatic resource impacts. This report provides additional compensatory mitigation recommendations for aquatic resource impacts for Corps consideration during development of the final mitigation plan for aquatic resource impacts in Appendix G. We believe that incorporating these additional mitigation features into the mitigation plan should serve to adequately offset aquatic resource impacts. The final mitigation plan for aquatic resource impacts would be acceptable provided that it was demonstrated through a Habitat Evaluation Procedures or similar analysis to completely offset losses in habitat value over the project life. A final aquatic mitigation plan could be provided in a supplemental FWCA report.

The Service appreciates the cooperation of your staff in development of this report. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Stark of this office at 918-581-7458, extension 240.

Sincerely,

Jerry J. Brabander
Field Supervisor

Enclosure

Colonel Walters

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cc: Chief, Planning and Environmental, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa, OK
Regional Director (ARD-ES), FWS, Albuquerque, NM
(Attn:: Dean Watkins)
Regional Director (ARD-ES), FWS, Atlanta, GA,
(Attn:: Jeff Weller)
Director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Little Rock, AR
(Attn:: Craig Uyeda)
Director, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Oklahoma City, OK
(Attn:: Fisheries and Natural Resources Section)
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Northeast Regional Office,
Porter, OK (Attn:: Mike Plunkett, Randy Hyler, and Gary Peterson)
Director, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma City, OK
(Attn:: Water Quality Programs Division 0207)
Regional Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Dallas, TX
(Attn: 6WQ-EM)
Director, Department of Arkansas Heritage, Little Rock, AR
Field Supervisor, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Conway, AR
(Attn: Marge Harney)
Manager, Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge, Vian, OK
Manager, White River National Wildlife Refuge, DeWitt, AR
Manager, Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge, Dardanelle, AR
Natural Resources Library, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC